Robotics: Urban Search & Rescue

TETRIX®-based SkillsUSA® event grows in popularity; middle schools now involved

LOUISVILLE, KY (July 21, 2016) – The national popularity of the Robotics: Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) event continues to rise among middle schoolers, high schoolers, and postsecondary students.

This year, 24 teams from across the country convened at the SkillsUSA® 2016 National Leadership and Skills Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, for the USAR national finals. This followed regional competitions in 23 states and continues a trend of growth over the past four years for the relatively new event, which was created and fostered by Pitsco Education.

As of 2016, USAR has broadened to allow middle school teams to compete at the national level. In addition, participation at the postsecondary level increased significantly.

USAR student teams engineer and build remote-controlled rescue robots able to negotiate a simulated disaster area. The event emphasizes a strong real-world and careers connection as similar robots are often used by rescue and law enforcement agencies in dangerous situations.

The TETRIX® Building System is a popular robotics platform for the young engineers. Top-prize winners at both the high school and postsecondary levels created robots that were based on or heavily incorporated TETRIX robotics components. In addition to robot engineering and on-course performance, teams are also judged on their written test, technical presentation, engineering notebook, and technical drawing.
According to Technical Committee Member Ashlee Ricks, the quality and sophistication of the robot builds has risen each year. “The creativity this year was stellar,” said Ricks. “The engineering was really good compared to previous years. Students made unique robots with customized, 3D-printed parts.”

Alan Kirby, the National Technical Committee Chair for USAR, links the popularity of the event to its real-world relevance. “There is no doubt that robotics events are engaging and fun for kids all around the world. The bigger picture here is that the career pathways that require robotics exposure, understanding, and hands-on experience are seeing the same growth trend.”

The top-finishing teams in the postsecondary division were:

- **Gold**: Jeffrey Ivy, Pikes Peak Community College-PS, Colorado Springs, CO
- **Silver**: Taylor Forwalter and Mattias Anderson, Butte College, Oroville, CA
- **Bronze**: Zachery Hunt and Johnny Willis, Tennessee College of Applied Technology-Pulaski, Pulaski, TN

The top-finishing teams in the high school division were:

- **Gold**: Rachel Arnold and Olivia Klotz, Blackstone Valley RVTHS, Upton, MA
- **Silver**: TaVon Davis and Jared McMaster, Central High School, Cheyenne, WY
- **Bronze**: Savannah Bradburn and Landon Davis, Heritage High School, Maryville, TN

The top-finishing teams in the middle school division were:

- **Gold**: Michael Vayinger and Alex Ge, Pilgrim Park Middle School, Elm Grove, WI
- **Silver**: Mason T. Ratliff and Duncan T. Parker, Palestine High School, Palestine, TX

**Highlights/Multimedia**

- **Click to Tweet**: Urban Search & Rescue @SkillsUSA event with @TETRIXrobotics spreading across US. @pitscoed [http://www.tetrixrobotics.com/Competition/?art=7597](http://www.tetrixrobotics.com/Competition/?art=7597)
- **TETRIX Building System**: [www.tetrixrobotics.com](http://www.tetrixrobotics.com)
- **Urban Search & Rescue event**: [http://www.tetrixrobotics.com/Competition/?art=7597](http://www.tetrixrobotics.com/Competition/?art=7597)
- **Pitsco Education**: [http://www.pitsco.com](http://www.pitsco.com)
- **SkillsUSA**: [http://skillsusa.org](http://skillsusa.org)
- **Images**: For high-resolution images, email publicrelations@pitsco.com.

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